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## Joint Commission on Technology and Science

August 29, 2019, at 10:00 a.m.

Pocahontas Building, House Committee Room

<http://dls.virginia.gov/commission/jcots.htm>

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The Joint Commission on Technology and Science (the Commission) met in Richmond with Senator John A. Cosgrove, Jr., chair, presiding.<sup>1</sup> The meeting began with introductions and opening remarks followed by presentations and discussion. Materials presented at the meeting are accessible through the [Commission's meetings webpage](#).

### **Presentation: AI and Facial Recognition Technology**

*Delegate Lashrecse D. Aird*

*Sunny Singh, Founder, Soch, Inc.*

Delegate Lashrecse D. Aird described to the Commission the origin of her interest in Artificial Intelligence (AI). She explained that because of the inherent, unconscious biases in human-created systems and the great potential for intentional harm from AI abusers, her goals are to adopt effective AI laws and regulations to guide the usage of data and technology and to train policymakers about emerging threats and opportunities. Her starting point is a study that will be introduced to the General Assembly during the 2020 Session. Delegate Aird introduced Mr. Sunny Singh from Soch, Inc.

Mr. Singh gave an overview of what is meant by AI and discussed some of the opportunities that AI and facial recognition technology presents, with a particular emphasis on government services. He presented examples of ways AI can be utilized in healthcare, education, and criminal justice. He also discussed the consequences of not managing AI effectively. These include fewer human jobs, decreased privacy, and increased costs of governmental services and crime rates.

Mr. Singh advocated regulations to target four general categories: data ownership, access to technology, sharing and agreements, and disclosures. He stated that the General Assembly should become informed on the opportunities and risks of AI technology and work with governmental subdivisions and the industry to plan for the future. Mr. Singh pointed out that the industry is especially interested in the certainty that accompanies regulation in this field.

Following the presentation, members discussed other potential abuses of AI. Specific risks that were mentioned were deep fake videos, which were the subject of HB 2678 (2019), and limitations and biases made when facial recognition is used on dark-skinned faces. This is especially relevant to errors made during police lineups.

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<sup>1</sup> **Members Present:** Senator John A. Cosgrove, Jr., Delegate Glenn R. Davis, Senator Adam P. Ebbin, Delegate Kenneth R. Plum, Delegate Eileen Filler-Corn, Delegate Mark D. Sickles, Delegate Dave A. LaRock

**Members Absent:** Senator Mamie E. Locke, Senator Bill R. DeSteph, Jr., Senator Siobhan S. Dunnavant, Delegate Kathy J. Byron, Delegate Terry L. Austin

The presentation concluded with the Commission expressing general support for the ongoing work. Some members expressed interest in involving the companies working with AI technology in future meetings as well.

### **Presentation: Aviation and Aerospace 2019 Update**

*Daniel Bud'Oakey, Executive Director, Virginia Aviation Business Association*

Mr. Oakey presented the result of various budget proposals for FY 2019 related to aviation and aerospace programs. Some items were included in the final 2019 budget, while others were not. Mr. Oakey asked that the Commission recommend the rejected budget items be included in the budget for FY 2020.

Mr. Oakey then discussed a new grant program created by the Department of Defense that is aimed at reducing the United States' reliance on foreign-made drones. Mr. Oakey proposed creating an additional grant administered by the Center for Innovative Technology to attract the businesses that will be applying for the federal grant to produce their drone technology in Virginia. Members of the Commission expressed interest in the new idea, and Mr. Oakey committed to continue developing it.

The Commission asked about a number of programs in Virginia related to early aviation workforce development. Some members expressed that while there are good programs aimed at enticing young people to the field, one barrier is burdensome regulations on flying drones.

### **Presentation: Draft Commonwealth Research and Technology Strategic Roadmap**

*Alan Edwards and Emily Salmon, State Council of Higher Education for Virginia*

Mr. Edwards and Ms. Salmon presented the draft version of the Commonwealth Research and Technology Strategic Roadmap (the Roadmap), which the Virginia Research Investment Committee (VRIC) is required *by statute* to submit to the chairman of the Commission. The Roadmap is meant to guide the funding decisions for research institutions. Mr. Edwards and Ms. Salmon agreed to discuss the details of the Roadmap in more depth at the next Commission meeting; the Roadmap will likely be final at that time.

### **Next Meeting**

The next meeting of the Commission will be December 4, 2019, at Virginia Tech.

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For more information, see the [Commission's website](#) or contact the Division of Legislative Services staff:

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